

## Jan 16, 2006- Rep. Nick Rahall Announces RTI, Benedum Partnership To Create New Business Incubator

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WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) called the new partnership between the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the Nick J. Rahall Transportation Institute and its partner, the Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation (PGC), a "promising partnership for all of West Virginia" and commended Benedum for their \$350,000 contribution to help develop a new transportation related business incubator in Huntington, W.Va.

"By serving as a vehicle for developing new transportation-related companies in West Virginia, the business incubator will help RTI fulfill its vision of Building Jobs Through Transportation," Rahall said. "I commend the Benedum Foundation for seeing the potential for a program such as this and believe today marks the beginning of a long, productive partnership between the Foundation and the Rahall Transportation Institute."

RTI, in partnership with PGC, will serve as a regional catalyst in the development of new transportation-related companies in West Virginia through a physical business incubator combined with new company start-up support including business acceleration services.

"With the guidance that this business incubator will provide, West Virginia transportation-related businesses will be armed with the tools they need to succeed," Rahall said. "Stronger businesses mean a stronger economy for all of West Virginia, making this a special day not just for those involved but for all of the residents of our fine state."

Richard Begley, associate director of RTI, commended both Benedum and Rahall for their efforts and expressed excitement about the potential rewards of the new program.

"This program will help accelerate business opportunities from several technologies being developed at Marshall University and will support the development of new transportation-related companies," Begley said. "We anticipate very soon that it will also create a significant number of new jobs near Marshall University and in southern West Virginia

Pat Getty of the Benedum Foundation, too, sees the partnership as an initiative that will pay dividends long down the road.

"RTI, through the vision of Congressman Rahall, has proven itself among the nation's premiere institutions for building jobs through transportation and we commend the Congressman for his continued efforts in making RTI a model for

others to follow," Getty said.

"We think that RTI, with its status as a federal university transportation center, its relationship with Marshall University, the leadership of Senator Plymale and its strong staff, is well positioned to develop new transportation industry businesses in West Virginia," Getty said. "The successful commercialization of good ideas through the development of knowledge-based businesses will be critically important to the economic future of West Virginia."

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, an independent foundation established in 1944, focuses its grant-making activities in West Virginia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The foundation was created by the late Michael and Sarah Benedum, both natives of West Virginia, who named it after their only child, Claude Worthington Benedum. Since its inception, the Benedum Foundation has awarded almost 6,500 grants worth over \$265 million.

The Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation is a business accelerator with the mission of generating new business growth. Utilizing a proven process, Gateways partners with leading academic and research institutions to establish and develop Centers of Technology and to effectively connect these institutions and Centers with industry.

The Nick J. Rahall, II Appalachian Transportation Institute was established as a University Transportation Center (UTC) in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century in 1998. RTI operates a broad-based transportation research, education and technology transfer program, and received the "Transportation Excellence Award" from the Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) of the United States Department of Transportation. RTI's theme is "Transportation and Economic Development in Mountain Regions."